

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. – 8. (canceled)

9. (New) In an automatic analyzer having a nozzle mounted on a reagent sampling arm for extracting and dispensing a sample of a liquid reagent in a reagent bottle closed by a puncturable seal, the improvement which comprises:

a sealing piercing tool;

a container for holding said piercing tool;

means for attaching said piercing tool to the nozzle when the nozzle is inserted into said piercing tool; and

means for releasing said piercing tool from the nozzle when the nozzle is withdrawn from said piercing tool.

10. (New) An automatic analyzer according to claim 9 wherein a leaf spring is mounted in said container to hold said piercing tool in place therein and said piercing tool has a hollow interior into which the nozzle is inserted.

11. (New) An automatic analyzer according to claim 9 wherein said means for attaching said piercing tool to the nozzle comprises a lever mounted on said

piercing tool and a slot formed in said nozzle whereby when the nozzle is inserted into said piercing tool said lever engages said slot.

12. (New) An automatic analyzer according to claim 11 wherein said lever is spring biased to a closed position.

13. (New) An automatic analyzer according to claim 9 wherein said means for releasing said piercing tool from the nozzle comprises an opening in a wall of said container through which a lower end of said lever normally extends whereby when said piercing tool and the nozzle are moved upwardly said lower end of said lever engages an upper end of said opening and causes said lever to pivot out of engagement with said slot.

14. (New) An automatic analyzer according to claim 9 wherein said piercing tool has a slidable guide mounted around a lower end thereof and the seal of the reagent bottle has a tapered recess whereby when said piercing tool is moved downwardly, said slidable guide contacts the tapered recess to center said piercing tool in the tapered recess.

15. (New) An automatic analyzer according to claim 14 wherein said slidable guide is biased downwardly with respect to said piercing tool by a spring.